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**SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES**

**The Combination Tool  
In The CINC's Operational Toolbox**

**A Monograph  
by  
Major Gordon C. Bonham  
Infantry**



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Major Gordon C. Bonham

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Approved by:

Douglas O. Hendricks Monograph Director  
LtCol Douglas O. Hendricks, MA

James R. McDonough Director, School of  
Col James R. McDonough, MS Advanced Military  
Studies

Philip J. Brookes Director, Graduate  
Philip J. Brookes, Ph.D. Degree Program

Accepted this 8th day of May 1991

### ABSTRACT

SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES, THE COMBINATION TOOL IN THE CINC'S OPERATIONAL TOOLBOX by MAJ Gordon C. Bonham, USA, 56 pages.

This monograph examines the application of special operations forces (SOF) as a means to achieve strategic ends across the operational continuum. In war, political constraints are minimal, and a theater commander-in-chief (CINC) is allowed to employ overwhelming conventional force, across time and space, to accomplish his strategic ends. However, in operations short of war, political limitations restrict the CINC's "expression" of operational art in terms of time, space and amount of force. SOF provides the CINC a means to conduct operational art within the political restrictions. Capable of conducting independent special operations or complementing conventional forces, SOF is a versatile and flexible "tool" for use across the operational continuum.

The monograph analyzes three historical cases of SOF across the operational continuum. Operation Galahad (Burma, 1944), Operation Kingpin (Vietnam, 1970), and Operation Thunderbolt (Uganda, 1976) illustrate the use of SOF in war, conflict, and peacetime competition respectively. The validity of SOF as an operational "tool" is determined by passing these examples through the "lens" of FM 100-5's criteria for operational art. The analysis shows that special operations conducted by SOF provides the ways and means to achieve the ends regardless of the political constraints.

This study concludes that SOF provides the CINC with a versatile means to achieve his strategic ends across the operational continuum. Like a carpenter's combination tool, SOF provides a wide variety of capabilities for the CINC's operational toolbox. In war, SOF exploits enemy weaknesses, as a combat multiplier for conventional forces, and sets conditions for operational success. In operations short of war, where conventional forces are constrained by political limitations, SOF provides a means to achieve the strategic ends for the theater. In short, as the political influence on the operational continuum increases, the application of SOF increases as the ability to use conventional forces decreases.

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## INTRODUCTION

Victory won by a sneaky few over the unsuspecting many has been a source of fascination since warriors first told stories around campfires.<sup>1</sup>

Since Homer's account of the Trojan Horse in The Iliad, special operations have fascinated readers and captured the imagination of military leaders. Sprinkled with fact and enhanced with fiction, authors have created an aura of mystique and romance surrounding these operations. This has resulted in mistrust and misunderstanding of special operations forces (SOF). Idealized as a cross between "James Bond" and "John Wayne," advocates portray SOF as a "Mission Impossible" force. The conventional military establishment, however, looks upon them as overpaid, underworked, and out of place on the modern battlefield. All of these perceptions are wrong.

SOF provides the theater commander-in-chief (CINC) a versatile force for application across the operational continuum. Like a carpenter's combination tool, SOF provides a wide variety of capabilities to the CINC's operational toolbox. In war, SOF exploits enemy weaknesses as a combat multiplier for conventional forces, and sets conditions for operational success. In operations short of war, where conventional forces are constrained or restricted by political limitations, SOF provides the commander a means to achieve the strategic ends for his theater of operations. However, to realize this potential, the mistrust and misperceptions surrounding SOF must be dispelled.

The first step in clearing away this fog is to establish a common language through mutually accepted terms and definitions. The Joint Chiefs of Staff Publication 3-05 (JCS Pub 3-05), Doctrine for Joint Special Operations, defines SO as:

Actions conducted by specially organized, trained, and equipped military and paramilitary forces to achieve military, political, economic, or psychological objectives by nonconventional military means in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive areas. They are conducted in peace, conflict, and war, independent and in coordination with operations of conventional forces. Politico-military considerations frequently shape special operations, requiring clandestine, covert, or low visibility techniques, and oversight at the national level. Special operations differ from conventional operations in degrees of physical and political risk, operational techniques, mode of employment, independence from friendly support, and dependence on detailed operational intelligence and indigenous assets.<sup>2</sup>

SOF is defined by JCS Pub 3-05 as:

forces specifically organized, trained and equipped to conduct or support special operations. They possess unique capabilities designed to address those missions, regardless of where they are conducted in the operational continuum.<sup>3</sup>

SOF is, by doctrine, a joint force made up of Army, Air Force, and Navy Special Operations Forces. Although single service special operations are possible in concept, they are infeasible in practice. The execution of a special operation, from insertion to extraction, requires a joint air, ground, and maritime team to achieve mission success.

United States SOF is organized under the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). While capable of conducting special operations directly for the National

Command Authority, USSOCOM's primary mission is as a supporting command. In this role, it provides a combat-ready SOF package to a Unified CINC's Special Operations Command (SOC), tailored to support the theater campaign plan.<sup>4</sup>

The SOC plans and executes special operations to support the CINC's overall campaign plan. Special operations is actually a category of warfare which includes five principal missions: unconventional warfare, foreign internal defense, special reconnaissance, counterterrorism, and direct action. Based on the situation, the SOC will execute one, or a combination of SO missions to achieve the CINC's operational objectives. However, this study will only focus on direct action which is defined as:

Short-duration strikes and other small scale offensive actions principally taken by SOF to seize, destroy, or inflict damage on a specified target; or destroy, capture, or recover designated personnel or material.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the doctrine, SOF is often overlooked as an operational "tool." Special operations is viewed more as spectacular tactical actions than operational art. The purpose of this study is to explore the use of SOF, across the operational continuum, as a means for the CINC to achieve his strategic goals. The study will examine special operations conducted during war (Operation Galahad, 1944), conflict (Operation Kingpin, 1970), and peacetime competition (Operation Thunderbolt, 1976). Using FM 100-5's criteria for operational art, each case will be analyzed to determine whether the



application of SOF (Means) and the conduct of special operations (Ways) achieved the strategic goals (Ends) for the theater. This analysis will lead to conclusions for the use of SOF as a "tool" across the operational continuum.

Is special operations operational art or simply a spectacular tactical action? This question is not only the heart of this study, but also the root of many misconceptions concerning special operations and the operational level of war. The conventional military thinker defines the operational level of war in terms of sequential actions in time and space. However, these terms are inappropriate for special operations and provide a narrow and biased view of operational art. To resolve this issue, a review of classical and contemporary theory is necessary to define operational art and establish its relationship with special operations.

#### THEORY

FM 100-5, Operations, defines Operational Art as "the employment of military forces to attain strategic goals in a theater of war or theater of operations through the design, organization, and conduct of campaigns and major operations."<sup>6</sup> The operational level of war is the linkage between the political leader at the strategic level and the soldier at the tactical level. The operational commander determines the military condition that the soldier must produce to achieve the political aims of the war. Once policy is translated into military objectives, the operational commander applies

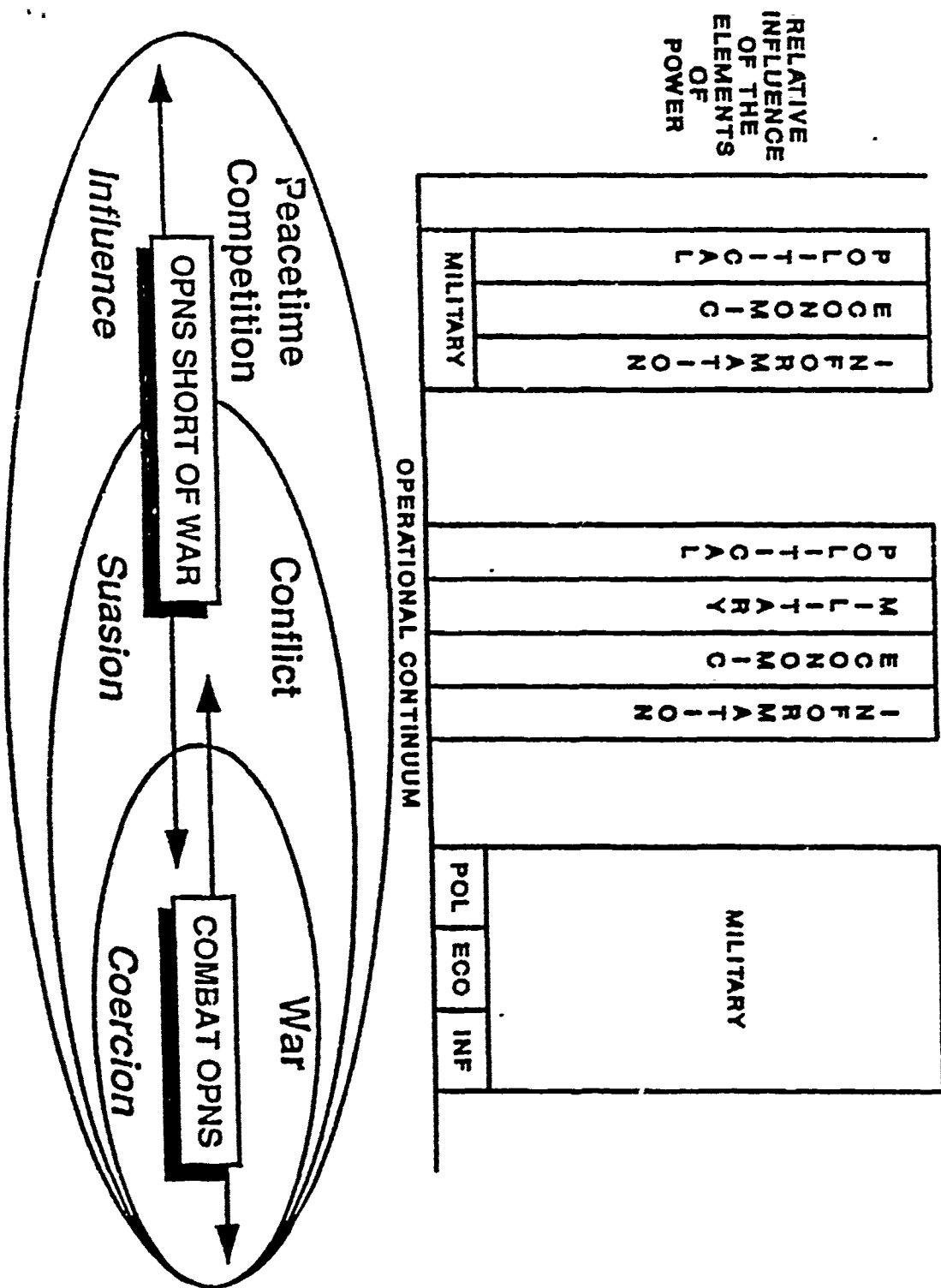
resources and sequences actions to create the military condition that will "exert considerable leverage beyond the immediate physical objective" to achieve the political ends.<sup>7</sup>

This definition of operational art embodies the Clausewitzian theory of war as a political "tool." "War is an act of policy. The political object is the goal, war is the means of reaching it."<sup>8</sup> "The political object," Clausewitz states, "will thus determine both the military objective and the amount of [force]" permitted to obtain the objective.<sup>9</sup> The greater the political aim, the more absolute the war and "the more military and less political the war will appear." However, limited aims will correspondingly limit not only the military objective, but the amount of force used to achieve those aims. This will result in a "conflict that will seem increasingly political in character."<sup>10</sup>

This relationship is graphically portrayed by the operational continuum. The global environment is a dynamic state in constant turmoil between absolute war and perfect peace. The operational continuum portrays this interaction and the relative influence of the elements of power across the spectrum. (See Figure A) Moving from war to peacetime competition, the continuum shows a decrease in the relative influence of the military element of power. This is inversely proportional to the "increasingly political character" of conflict and peacetime competition.

Figure A: The Operational Continuum and the Elements of Power<sup>11</sup>

## The Operational Continuum



The study of operational art has focused almost exclusively at the war end of the continuum. Professor James J. Schneider, in his article "Loose Marble," provides an excellent criteria for the analysis of operational art in the context of war.<sup>12</sup> Sequential operations conducted by large forces over extended time and space have become the accepted prerequisites for operational art. However, this criteria fails to define operational art during conflict and peacetime competition. When one considers that "absolute wars are relatively rare in history, and virtually all wars and conflicts since WW II have been limited," our definition of operational art appears to be narrow and inadequate.<sup>13</sup>

Professor Schneider addresses this problem by redefining operational art in broader, less restrictive terms. "Tactics," Schneider submits, "is concerned with weapon ranges and effects. If you are thinking above the level of weapon ranges and effects you are entering the operational arena." At the lower end of the continuum, political constraints limit military objectives and the use of force. This tends to close the gap between the strategic and tactical levels of war. In this constrained environment "tactical action that has strategic effect is operational art."<sup>14</sup>

Schneider illustrates this point through an analogy that compares an operational commander's theater to a painter's canvas. War provides an extremely large canvas, in both time and space, for the operational "artist" to "express" himself

in an unconstrained form. However, in conflict and peacetime competition, "your canvas may only be the size of a postage stamp which limits your expression of operational art. But, it is still art. When strategy and tactics are very close, the expression of art - the size of the canvas - will be very small."<sup>15</sup>

Operational art, "the employment of military forces to attain strategic goals," exists at every point along the continuum. The expression of that art is dependent upon the political climate at the point of interest. However, it is impossible to evaluate operational art conducted in peacetime competition by a criteria developed from the study of operational art in war. A common criteria is required to provide a standard for the study of operational art regardless of "the size of the canvas." This brings us to the three focal points of operational art.

FM 100-5 reduces the criteria for operational art to three essential requirements:

1. Establish a military condition which will achieve the strategic goals within the theater of operations. (ENDS)
2. Initiates action (or a sequence of actions) that will produce the military condition. (WAYS)
3. Applies resources to accomplish the actions. (MEANS)<sup>16</sup>

In this context, operational art can be expressed as an algebraic equation. The operational level commander, or CINC, is faced with solving the following equation:

$$\text{ENDS} = \text{MEANS} + \text{WAYS}$$

The CINC solves the ENDS side of the equation by determining the military condition that will achieve the political aims in his theater. He then sequences resources and actions, MEANS and WAYS, to balance the equation and achieve the ENDS. The operational equation of ENDS, WAYS, and MEANS provides a valid criteria for defining operational art regardless of the "size of the canvas" or its position along the continuum.

The nature of operational art, and the solution of the operational equation, will vary according to its position along the continuum. War permits the application of military force through sequential operations with few limitations. However, conflict and peacetime competition restrict the operational artist in time, space, and the amount of force permitted. Instead of sequential actions sequenced in depth, political constraints may limit the campaign to cumulative actions sequenced linearly. Battles can not "fit" on the "small canvas" of peacetime competition. This presents a difficult challenge for the operational commander. How do you practice operational art and "solve the equation" throughout the operational continuum?

SOF provides the CINC a wide range of "artistic effects" across the operational continuum. The employment of SOF embodies B.H. Liddell-Hart's concept of the indirect approach. Versatile and flexible, SOF is capable of conducting sequential operations or executing independent cumulative actions.<sup>17</sup> Orchestrated with the other elements of power, SOF provides

the CINC the ability to "solve" the operational equation when conventional forces can not.

SOF is the CINC's "combination tool" with applications in war, conflict, and peacetime competition. In war, SOF plays an integral part in the CINC's campaign plan. Independent, or in conjunction with conventional forces, special operations create conditions for operational success within the theater. During conflict, SOF gives the CINC a "tool" to achieve the ends that, because of political constraints, conventional forces cannot. Finally, in peacetime competition SOF is the CINC's primary means to "exercise operational art using [forces] whose capability is not determined in terms of size and firepower, but more in terms of timing and placement."<sup>18</sup>

War, with limited political constraints, provides the operational commander a large "canvas" to "express" his art. This environment permits conventional forces to apply overwhelming combat power to achieve strategic ends. SOF also plays a key role in war. The employment of "Merrill's Marauders" by LTG Joseph W. Stillwell is an excellent example of SOF providing the operational commander the means and ways to achieve his ends in war.

#### OPERATION GALAHAD: SOF IN WAR

In the summer of 1943, the situation in the China-Burma-India Theater of Operation (CBI) was critical. Japanese forces had conquered Burma, isolated China, and were

threatening India. The Allies desperately needed a strategy to check the Japanese advance and regain the initiative in the theater.

The British proposed a maritime strategy for the theater and called for increased American involvement. The campaign outlined sequential amphibious assaults to retake Samatra and Singapore. Aerial resupply would sustain the Chinese war effort, and MG Orde C. Wingate's unconventional operations would continue to harass the Japanese in Burma. However, this proposal failed to achieve the U.S. strategic ends for the CBI.<sup>19</sup>

The American strategy was designed to keep China in the war. The plan called for a land campaign into Burma to open a line of communication (LOC) to China. The goal was to revitalize Chinese forces and open a second front against the Japanese.<sup>20</sup>

In September 1943 Roosevelt, Churchill, and the Combined Chiefs of Staff met in Quebec to determine the direction of the war. The strategy that evolved was a compromise between the British and American positions. The Conference formed the Southeast Asia Command under Vice Admiral Lord Mountbatten with an American Deputy Commander, LTG Joseph W. Stillwell. The American land campaign into Northern Burma was accepted with Stillwell as the Northern Combat Area Commander (NCAC).<sup>21</sup> However, the British request for increased U.S. involvement in SEAC was approved. The Conference directed that an American



Infantry Regiment, patterned after Wingate's Chindit Raiders, be formed and immediately sent to SEAC.<sup>22</sup>

The Quebec Conference directive became a reality with the formation of the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional). Originally trained by Wingate as a long-range penetration force, the 5307th was transferred to Stillwell for employment in the NCAC.<sup>23</sup> On 4 Jan 1944, BG Frank D. Merrill took command of the 5307th and moved the unit to a staging area at Ningbyen to begin operations. Enroute to Ningbyen, a newspaper reporter coined the name "Merrill's Marauders" that would forever identify this legendary unit.<sup>24</sup>

The Marauders were assigned the operational code name Galahad and directed to strike deep against the Japanese LOC. The intent of Operation Galahad was to support Stillwell's main attack by turning the superior Japanese forces out of their forward positions. This was essential for the success of Stillwell's campaign to open the Burma Road and balance the operational equation of ends, ways, and means for the NCAC.

ENDS

The strategic goal for the CBI was to keep China in the war. This would maintain a second front against the Japanese and drain their combat power from the Pacific. Moreover, a secure China would allow basing for B-29 Bombers to strike directly against Japan. Politically, Chiang Kai-Shek's Army was critical for Allied morale and to prevent post-war China from becoming a communist state.<sup>25</sup>

The Japanese invasion of Burma completed the isolation of China. The airlift of supplies over the "Hump" was sufficient to keep Chiang Kai-Shek's Army alive, but unable to sustain offensive operations. A land LOC was needed to provide the required tonnage of supplies to generate a Chinese offensive against the Japanese.<sup>26</sup>

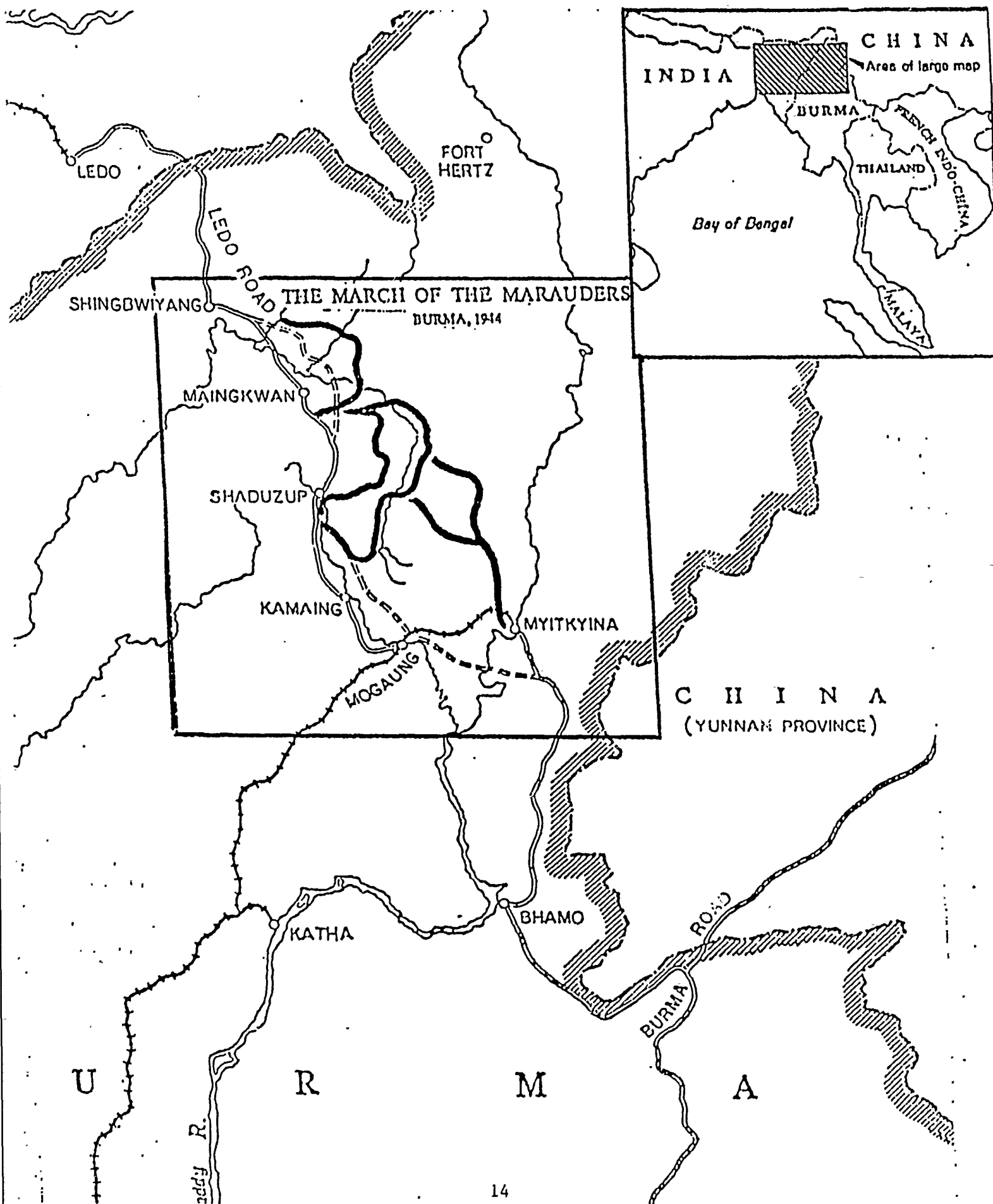
To achieve his strategic goals, Stillwell developed a campaign to establish a land LOC with China. The objective was to secure the area north of Mogaung and Myitkina in Northern Burma. (See Map 1) This would permit the construction of a road from the Ledo railhead to the old Burma Road that ran from China to a point east of Myitkina. Airfields were also critical to support the ongoing airlift with shorter and easier routes into China.<sup>27</sup> Myitkina was the objective point; it provided the entrance to the Burma Road, an all-weather airfield, and served as a communication center for Japanese forces in Northern Burma.<sup>28</sup> Once the Ledo road was completed, pipeline operations would triple the sustainment level for the Chinese Army.<sup>29</sup>

Stillwell determined the military condition required to achieve the strategic goals within his theater. His real challenge was how to accomplish his objectives in a theater that was an economy of force within an economy of force.

#### MEANS

GEN George C. Marshall, Army Chief of Staff, wrote that Stillwell "faced extremely difficult political problems and

Map 1: Operation Galahad and the NCAC<sup>31</sup>



his purely military problem of opposing large numbers of the enemy with few resources was unmatched in any theater."<sup>31</sup> The CBI was "out on the end of the thinnest supply line of all" and Stillwell was hard-pressed to find the means to achieve his ends.<sup>32</sup>

The bulk of Stillwell's combat power came from two Chinese Divisions. These divisions retreated from Burma with Stillwell and trained in India under his command. Although Stillwell served as Chiang Kai-Shek's Chief of Staff, he could not obtain additional Chinese forces for use in Burma. Despite the importance of opening the Burma Road, Chiang refused to divert forces away from China fearing a Japanese offensive north of the Yangtze and Mao Tse-tung's Red Army.<sup>33</sup>

For political reasons, Stillwell boasted that his Chinese Divisions were combat-ready. However, he realized that they were no match for the enemy he faced. The veteran Japanese 18th Division had conquered Burma and captured the bastion of Singapore. Under the command of General Tanaka, the Division was considered an elite force and masters of the jungle.<sup>34</sup> Stillwell needed a significant combat multiplier to enable his Chinese forces to defeat Tanaka's Division.

Stillwell's combat multiplier was the 5307th. The 3,000-man force of battle-hardened veterans gave him the punch he needed. Their ability to conduct long range penetration provided Stillwell the means to enhance the combat power of his Chinese forces. The Marauders' jungle savvy offset the

Japanese's environmental advantage both physically and morally.<sup>35</sup>

Sustainment for the campaign was a positive point. Rail networks in India provided the means to rapidly move supplies from the ports to forward staging areas. Air superiority and the 2d Troop Carrier Squadron provided the ability to support isolated forces throughout the NCAC.<sup>36</sup> This was critical for the development of Stillwell's campaign.

With one U.S. regimental size unit, four Chinese regiments and a Chinese tank group, Stillwell initiated his campaign. Although the force was physically inferior to the Japanese, "Stillwell believed that Merrill and Galahad could perform miracles."<sup>37</sup> This belief convinced him that he had sufficient means to accomplish his ends.

#### WAYS

Stillwell identified the Kamaing Road, the Japanese's line of communication and retreat, as the enemy's vulnerability. If this solitary artery through the jungle was cut, the Japanese would be physically and psychologically thrown off balance.<sup>38</sup> The envelopment and interdiction of an enemy's line of retreat is a decisive maneuver that requires superior forces and strong lines of communication.<sup>39</sup> How could Stillwell conduct this operation with an inferior force?

The 5307th provided Stillwell the solution to his operational equation. The Marauder's long-range penetration ability made them an ideal enveloping force. Their skill as

jungle fighters served as a combat multiplier and challenged the Japanese at their own form of warfare. Aerial resupply provided the means to sustain the Marauder's deep in the Japanese rear.

The NCAC Campaign Plan outlined sequential envelopments of the Japanese to clear Northern Burma and pave the way for the Ledo Road. The 22d and 38th Chinese Divisions would fix Japanese forces while Galahad made an "end run" to cut the Kamaing road and establish a blocking position. This would isolate the enemy and force him to turn, or fight in two directions. The Chinese would then drive south to destroy the Japanese caught in the "vice" and relieve the Marauders.<sup>40</sup>

On 24 February 1944, Stillwell launched his campaign to open the Burma Road. Galahad penetrated 60 miles of jungle and established a blocking position at Walawbum on 1 March. Shocked by this bold envelopment, Tanaka left a small fixing force against the Chinese and turned his mainbody against the Marauders. On 6 March, Chinese forces relieved the Marauders and secured the Hukwang Valley.<sup>41</sup>

Stillwell's next objective was the Mogaung Valley. Operation Galahad was repeated with equal success. By 22 April, Japanese forces withdrew from the valley and established defensive positions along a line from Kamaing to Myitkina. Because of the difficult terrain, approaching monsoons and the Japanese offensive into India, Tanaka anticipated an operational pause in the NCAC. However, for

political and military reasons, Stillwell wanted to grab Myitkina and its all weather airfield before the monsoons curtailed his offensive.<sup>42</sup>

Once again, Stillwell used the 5307th to overcome the obstacles of time, terrain, and enemy combat power. The operation began on 28 April with the Chinese Divisions pushing south down the Kamaing Road while the Marauders infiltrated undetected, through impassible terrain, to the objective. On 17 May, Galahad seized Myitkina Airfield and linking the Ledo Road to the Burma Road.<sup>43</sup>

The seizure of Myitkina completed the NCAC Campaign. Stillwell used the Marauder's special skills as a combat multiplier to defeat a superior force, in a harsh terrain, with limited resources. The 5307th, a forerunner of modern SOF, shaped the battlefield and set conditions for operational success. Operation Galahad and Stillwell's concept for the use of the Marauders is an excellent example of SOF as an operational "tool" for a CINC in war.

#### CONCLUSIONS: SOF IN WAR

SOF provides the operational commander a powerful and versatile means to accomplish his strategic ends during war. The CINC must consider SOF not as a separate entity, but as a supporting combat arm in the conduct of his campaign. As a combat multiplier, SOF significantly increases the combat power

of theater forces in relation to enemy forces. The unique capabilities of SOF sets conditions for operational success within the CINC's theater. The 5307th clearly demonstrated both of these traits in Stillwell's NCAC during WW II.

SOF enhances the combat power of theater forces as a potent operational combat multiplier. The synchronization of SO with conventional operations increases the combat effects of both operations against the enemy. The employment of SOF in support of conventional forces multiplies the combat power of the forces to a level greater than the sum of the two independently. The Japanese 18th Division was clearly the superior force compared to Stillwell's NCAC. However, the employment of the Marauder's in support of the Chinese main attack generated superior combat power - both physically and psychologically - relative to the Japanese. The Marauders were also instrumental in setting conditions for success in the NCAC.

SOF's unique capabilities provide the CINC the means and ways to set conditions for operational success. Relying upon the indirect approach, SOF avoids strength and strikes against the enemy's center of gravity at the most vulnerable point. This disrupts the enemy's synchronization and diverts combat power away from the main effort. An excellent economy of force, SOF steals the initiative which is the essential ingredient for operational success. The Marauders' objectives along the Kamaing Road were, in themselves, insignificant



pieces of terrain. However, the seizure of those objectives diverted combat power, disrupted command and control, and set the conditions for theater-wide success.

SOF supports conventional forces which are the CINC's primary "tool" in war. In operations short of war, political constraints limit the size of the CINC's "canvas" and his "expression" of operational art. This restricts the use of conventional forces while promoting the employment of SOF as a means to achieve ends. Operation Kingpin, a special operation conducted during the Vietnam Conflict, illustrates this situation.

#### OPERATION KINGPIN: SOF IN CONFLICT

From early 1969, when America began withdrawing forces from Vietnam, until early 1973, when 566 POWs were finally released. . . there was only one purpose left in the War. . . bring those prisoners home.<sup>44</sup>

The Prisoner of War (POW) issue was a tragic and emotional chapter in the Vietnam Conflict. Tortured and abused by captors who did not recognize the Geneva Convention, the POWs' plight was desperate.<sup>45</sup> The American people demanded action and the media attacked the Nixon Administration for its failure to respond. The Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV), exploiting the POWs as a powerful bargaining chip, demanded U.S. capitulation in exchange for their release. Complete surrender to the DRV was politically unacceptable, and a military solution to the dilemma did not exist.

A military operation to rescue the POWs seemed impossible. All identified POW camps were located within the city of Hanoi.<sup>46</sup> A mission into Hanoi would not only be suicide, but also exceed the political limitations of the conflict.

On 9 May 1970, this situation changed when intelligence identified two isolated POW camps outside of Hanoi.<sup>47</sup> This was the breakthrough that BG Donald D. Blackburn, Special Assistant for Counterinsurgency and Special Activities, had waited for. With the concurrence of the CJCS, GEN Earle G. Wheeler, Blackburn began planning a massive rescue of both camps. When intelligence reported the closure of the Ap Lo Prison in July, Blackburn concentrated on the remaining camp - a small compound located 23 miles west of Hanoi near the provincial capital of Son Tay.<sup>48</sup>

On 21 November 1970, Blackburn's concept came to life. COL Arthur D. "Bull" Simons led an elite SOF Task Force into Son Tay to "bring those prisoners home." Unfortunately, intelligence did not realize that Son Tay was no longer a prison, and the operation failed to liberate a single prisoner.<sup>49</sup> Although the execution of the raid was flawless, Congress and a hostile press ridiculed the mission as a fiasco. The combination of perfection-and-failure, pride-and-ridicule and a gallant attempt in a lost cause, has elevated the Son Tay Raid to the romantic level of legend.

However, strip away the legend and the failure associated with the mission and Son Tay provides an excellent example of

SOF as an operational "tool." Political limitations prevented the use of conventional forces from achieving the strategic goal of releasing the POWs. Diplomatic efforts were also unable to secure the POWs' freedom. SOF provided the means to achieve the strategic ends that diplomacy and conventional forces could not. The solution of the operational equation in this case clearly illustrates the political nature of conflict, and the difficulties involved with applying military force to obtain strategic ends.

#### ENDS

The U.S. strategy for the Vietnam Conflict is a controversial subject that falls outside the scope of this study. What is relevant, however, is the strategy for ending U.S. involvement in the conflict. The strategic ends, often lumped under the title Vietnamization, included the withdrawal of U.S. Forces, release of all POWs, and a strong and stable South Vietnam.<sup>50</sup> The Nixon Administration was determined to achieve these goals through diplomacy, and not military victory. This severely limited the military element of power and made the Paris Peacetalks the decisive battlefield for ending the conflict.<sup>51</sup>

The Paris Peacetalks were stalemated, and the impasse was the POW issue. The DRV Delegation demanded the unilateral withdrawal of all U.S. forces, the establishment of a coalition government in South Vietnam, and the reunification of Vietnam prior to any discussion of POW release. The U.S.

position called for a cease-fire, immediate release of all POWs, and a negotiated withdrawal of foreign forces from South Vietnam.<sup>52</sup> Secret talks between National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger and DRV Foreign Minister Le Duc Tho were also deadlocked over the POW issue.<sup>53</sup> On 8 October 1970, the U.S. made a final proposal which pledged not to invade the DRV and unilaterally withdraw of U.S. forces in exchange for the POWs' release.<sup>54</sup> The DRV disapproval of this offer opened the door for consideration of the military option.

In the wake of diplomatic failure, political leaders turned to the military to solve the POW problem. Public will and international "detente" prevented a massive military operation for the liberation of the POWs. However, a special operation could achieve the strategic ends that diplomacy and conventional military force could not.

#### MEANS

Operation Kingpin provided a viable means to achieve the nation's strategic ends. The operational security (OPSEC) and surgical execution of SOF permitted the mission's conduct within the political constraints of the conflict. Although designed to rescue only 61 POWs, the operation would provide leverage to achieve the greater strategic goals.

The Son Tay Raid would demonstrate U.S. concern and resolve to "bring those prisoners home." The operation would direct world attention on the issue and prove that Hanoi's claim of excellent care and treatment for the POWs was a lie.

This would undermine international support for the DRV, pressure Hanoi to improve POW care, and force them back to the Paris Peacetable. In short, the operation would reverse the POW bargaining chip from an advantage to a disadvantage for Hanoi. The leverage gained from a successful rescue would lead to concessions by the DRV and diplomatic success for the U.S.<sup>55</sup>

Despite the advantages, Operation Kingpin incurred significant risk. If the operation failed, it could add additional POWs and casualties to an already long list. The mission could motivate retaliation against remaining POWs instead of producing better conditions for them. Domestically, after the Cambodian incursion earlier in the year, antiwar activists and politicians might label the operation an invasion instead of a rescue. Internationally, Son Tay could shut the door that President Nixon was carefully trying to open with the Peoples' Republic of China (PRC).<sup>56</sup>

The risk assessment of the operation was made by military and political leaders. To maintain the moral high ground, strict rules of engagement were specified and Blackburn urged against bombing North Vietnam until after the operation. Simons alleviated many concerns with his estimate of 95% to 97% mission success (i.e. in and out with the force intact). Advisors believed the raid would focus so much attention on

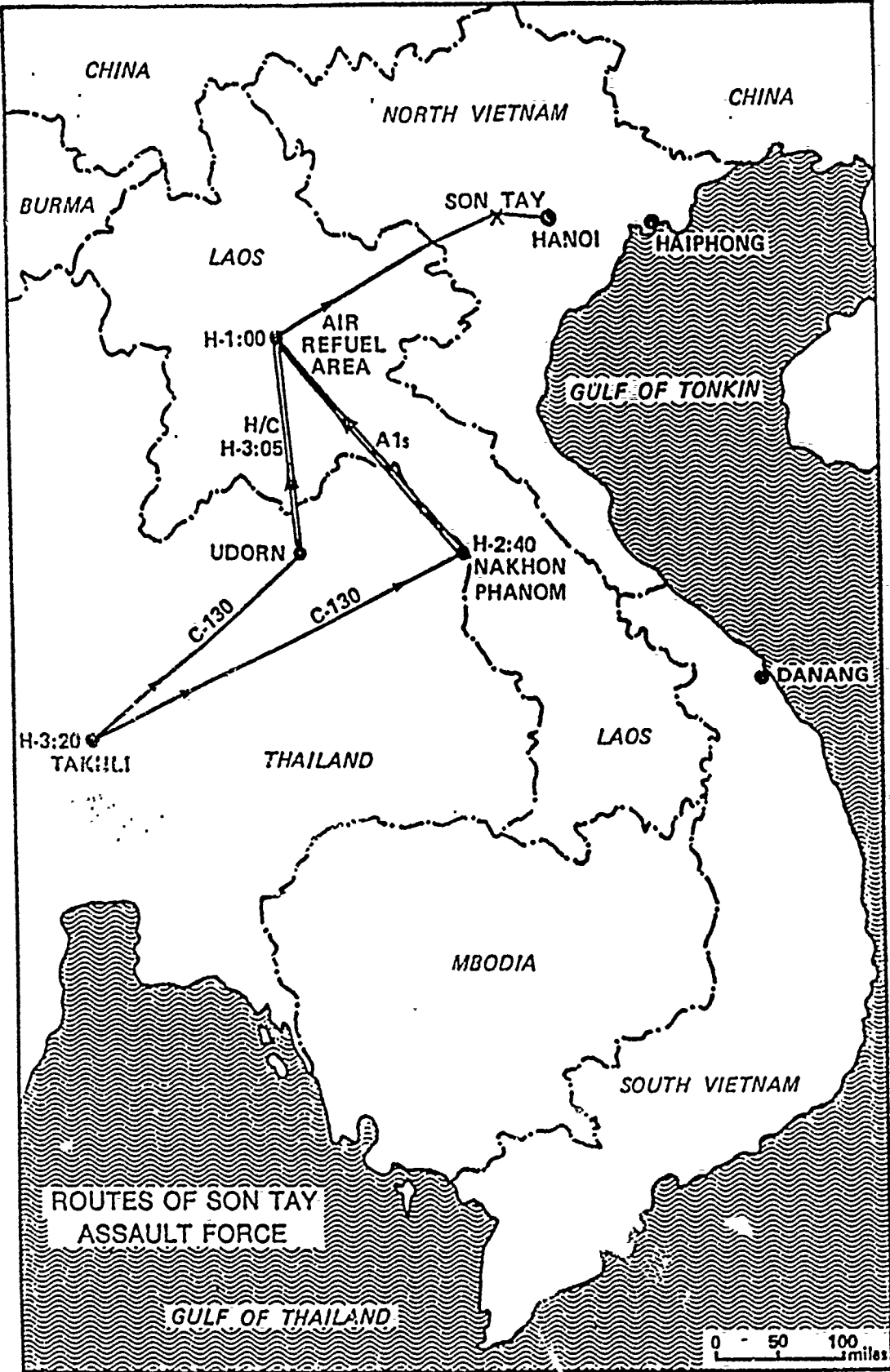
the POWs that retaliation by their captors would not be possible. The decision to accept the risk or disapprove the mission rested with one man.<sup>57</sup>

On 18 November 1970, President Nixon reviewed the entire operation. Already delayed once for political reasons, the approaching monsoon season would postpone the mission indefinitely if the 21 to 25 November window was disapproved. After intelligence reported 28 POWs had recently died in captivity, the President, "with grave concern for the prisoners," ordered the execution of Operation Kingpin.<sup>58</sup>

#### WAYS

The concept of operation for the Son Tay Raid was developed to achieve both political and military objectives. OPSEC was considered the key criteria for course of action (COA) selection to ensure mission success and avoid political embarrassment. Surprise was essential to protect the force and provide a critical combat multiplier. Simplicity was a desired component, but less important than the other two criteria.<sup>59</sup> After reviewing several COAs, Blackburn's planning group made its final selection.

The plan for Operation Kingpin maximized OPSEC and surprise, but was extremely complex. Launching from Thailand, a joint special operations task force (JSOTF) would conduct a long-range aerial infiltration under the DRV and PRC radar. (See Map 2) Twenty minutes prior to the assault, a massive naval airstrike against Haiphong would divert enemy attention



from Son Tay. Assuming surprise, the JSOTF would land, overpower the guards, rescue the POWs, and exfiltrate before the 12,000 enemy troops stationed in the area could react. In total, the operation covered 300,000 square miles and involved five airbases, three aircraft carriers, and over 105 airframes.<sup>61</sup> The plan's complexity was a minor problem compared to the lack of doctrine, equipment, and SOF to execute the mission.

Simons and Air Force BG Leroy J. Manor, overall mission commander, went to work to make the plan succeed. Relying on their combined special operations experience, the two leaders handpicked the JSOTF and developed the doctrine to employ it. Manor married the radar-evading MC-130 Talon with the endurance and assault capability of the HH-53 Helicopter to form the air assault package.<sup>62</sup> Simons prepared a detailed ground scheme of maneuver, and rehearsed the assault force until mission standards were met. The doctrine and techniques developed for Son Tay are still present in current SOF Doctrine.

At 2:18 a.m. 21 November 1970, Simons' assault force reached Son Tay undetected. After 27 minutes of near perfect execution, the entire force extracted without liberating a single POW.<sup>63</sup> Although the mission did not accomplish its primary objective, Operation Kingpin still provided leverage to achieve many of its political goals.

The Son Tay Raid forced the DRV to reevaluate the conflict and the POW issue. The special operation threw North Vietnam



into a panic and diverted forces from combat to rear security. Electrified by the gallant rescue attempt, the international press focused world attention on the POWs' plight. Coverage of the event not only embarrassed the DRV, but strained their relations with the Soviet Union and the PRC who feared Hanoi had lost control of the conflict. Operation Kingpin undermined the DRV's international support by turning the POW bargaining chip into a humanitarian outrage.<sup>64</sup>

While the operation failed to rescue any POWs, the mission indirectly improved POW life in captivity. To prevent future rescue attempts, the DRV consolidated all POW camps into large compounds inside Hanoi. Combined with international pressure, the consolidation improved morale, care, and conditions for the POWs. When questioned upon their release, 70% of all POWs stated that the Son Tay Raid was "a major positive effect and essential to their well-being" both physically and psychologically.<sup>65</sup>

Operation Kingpin is clearly an example of operational art: "the employment of military forces to attain strategic goals." Conventional thought would discount the Son Tay Raid as a purely tactical action. However, the objectives for the raid and the ends it accomplished, even in failure, had significant impact far exceeding "weapon range and effects." The operation is an excellent example of SOF as a means to achieve strategic ends in conflict.

## SOF IN CONFLICT

Conflict differs from war in the degree of political control and the size of the operational "canvas." War permits the use of military power, with few constraints, sequenced across a large "canvas" of time and space in order to achieve the strategic ends. Conflict, however, is shaped by the political element of power which limits the application of military force. This gives the CINC a smaller "canvas" in terms of time, space, and "artistic expression." The improper use of force risks escalating the conflict into war or jeopardizing the political ends. In this environment, conventional military force is analogous to "a bull in a china shop."

SOF provides a means to achieve strategic ends in conflict that other elements of military power can not. Unlike conventional forces, the employment of SOF will not cause escalation. The OPSEC that is inherent with special operations allows SOF to operate within the sensitive environment of conflict. SOF's special skills, tailored structure, and high reliability provides the confidence to conduct missions in a politically high risk environment like Son Tay. The ability to conduct cumulative actions that are independent of other actions makes SOF ideal for the small "canvas" of conflict.

SOF is, by nature, a cumulative way to achieve strategic goals. The smaller "canvas" of conflict prevents sequencing conventional actions across time and space. Conflict also narrows the gap between strategy and tactics. In conditions

like this, a special operation at the right time and the right place can achieve strategic results. Although tactical in nature, at the point in time and space, the action applies leverage at the strategic level to obtain the political objectives of the conflict. In this respect, SOF can shape the political "battlefield" for a diplomatic victory.

Despite political constraints, conventional forces are still a viable "tool" for a CINC to employ in conflict. However, this is not the case in peacetime competition. The dominance of political, economic, and informational elements of power in peacetime competition diminishes the influence and appropriateness of the military element of power. Political restrictions and constraints exclude the use of virtually all conventional forces. In this environment, SOF becomes the CINC's most viable "tool." The Entebbe Rescue Operation provides insight for the use of SOF to achieve strategic ends during peacetime competition.

#### OPERATION THUNDERBOLT: SOF IN PEACETIME COMPETITION

On 27 June 1976, Air France Flight 139 from Tel Aviv to Paris was hijacked after a routine stop in Athens.<sup>66</sup> Seized in the name of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the operation was executed by an international terrorist syndicate controlled by PFLP Leader, Dr. Wadi Hadad.<sup>67</sup> After refueling in Libya, the terrorist directed the aerobus to its final destination, Entebbe, Uganda.

The terrorists quickly made their demands known. After the normal rhetoric, the PFLP demanded the release of 53 convicted terrorists held in Israel, France, Germany, Switzerland, and Kenya. The PFLP threatened to execute the hostages if their demands were not met by 1200 hrs 1 July. Despite verbal attacks against France, Germany, and the United States, the terrorists released all non-Israeli passengers clearly identifying Israel as their target. Although experienced in countering regional terrorism, Israel had never faced a crisis involving so many hostages, held so far away, in a hostile country.<sup>68</sup>

Since breaking relations with Israel in 1972, Idi Amin, Uganda's volatile dictator, had become a champion for the Palestinian cause. Amin actively trained terrorists in his military, and maintained close ties with Libya and Syria. Although he publicly claimed to be a neutral negotiator, intelligence reported that Amin was actively supporting the PFLP at Entebbe.<sup>69</sup> The support of a terrorist act by a head of state set a dangerous precedent and intensified Israeli fears.<sup>70</sup>

Israel's Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, convened a crisis action team to develop COAs for handling the situation. Diplomatic and economic attempts to bring pressure on Amin required time that was not available. Although adamant against surrendering to the terrorist's demands, Defense Minister Shimon Peres could not offer a viable military option to resolve the crisis. Isolated and vulnerable, the cabinet

ministers agreed that the lives of 105 hostages should not be sacrificed for 53 convicted terrorists.<sup>71</sup>

Despite Israel's policy against negotiating with terrorists, Rabin announced the decision to "negotiate in principal" for the hostages' release. Basking in the glow of international attention, the PFLP sensed the opportunity to further humiliate Israel, and extended the ultimatum until 1200 hrs 4 July.<sup>72</sup> Although the concept of negotiating with terrorists was revolting, Israel was thankful for the additional time to develop and review alternative COAs.

A time-sensitive peacetime crisis presents a terrible dilemma for a nation. Political and economic power, which dominate the environment of peacetime competition, require time to affect a situation. Informational power is critical for both sides in a crisis, but is seldom decisive in resolving the issue. Conventional forces are decisive, but grossly inappropriate for peacetime conditions. SOF provides a means, in concert with the other elements of power, to achieve strategic ends, but with risk. It was this risk, weighed against the consequences of taking no action, that Rabin grappled with as he analyzed the ends, ways, and means of the Entebbe crisis.

ENDS

Israel's strategic ends for resolving the crisis encompassed more than the immediate objective of saving the hostages. At risk was Israel's terrorist policy, and the

nation's ability to ensure the safety of her citizens. Also at stake was Rabin's coalition government and the nation's pride. If the crisis was not resolved favorably, Rabin's government would collapse and Israel, already shaken by the traumatic 1973 War, would be morally devastated.<sup>73</sup>

The PFLP had skillfully maneuvered Israel into an impossible situation. Submission to the PFLP demands would humiliate Israel, invalidate her terrorist policy, destroy the Rabin government, and strengthen the Palestinian position. If Israel refused to surrender, the hostages' death would demonstrate Israeli impotence, collapse the government, and begin a wave of terrorist strikes against the Jewish State.<sup>74</sup> From the PFLP perspective, Israel could not win.

The decision to negotiate with the PFLP was a difficult and unpopular choice. Faced with the approaching ultimatum, Rabin used political means to buy time and keep the hostages alive. The additional time allowed the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) to develop a viable military option, with risk, to solve the crisis. As negotiations degenerated into extortion and the execution of the hostages appeared imminent, Operation Thunderbolt provided the only means to secure the nation's strategic ends.<sup>75</sup>

#### MEANS

In concept, Operation Thunderbolt would achieve all of Israel's strategic ends. The operation would rescue the hostages and reaffirm Israel's strong antiterrorist policy. This

would not only demonstrate Israel's ability to protect her citizens worldwide, but deter future terrorist attacks.<sup>76</sup> A successful mission would rekindle national pride, strengthen the Rabin government, and damage the Palestinian position. However, along with the advantages, Thunderbolt entailed considerable risk.

The risks involved with Operation Thunderbolt were extreme and could be considered a gamble. Failure at Entebbe would result in the capture or annihilation of the entire force. An unsuccessful mission would morally devastate Israel and provide terrorists and Arabs the opportunity to exploit the defeat. Regardless of the outcome, the operation would be labeled a blatant act of aggression against Uganda resulting in the condemnation of Israel by the world community. Finally, even if the mission was successful, IDF planners estimated 30 hostages would be killed (KIA) and fifty wounded (WIA). It is not an exaggeration to say that the fate of Israel would ride with the success or failure of the operation.<sup>77</sup>

Initially, the Israeli Cabinet considered the risks of the operation too high. However, as the deadline approached and the PFLP's demands increased, Rabin concluded that "negotiations under prevailing conditions entails no less danger, and perhaps more, than the proposed mission."<sup>78</sup> The gravity of the crisis forced the cabinet to accept the hostages as "soldiers in the front line," and risk the fate of a few for

the fate of the nation. Recognizing that Operation Thunderbolt was the only viable way to achieve the nation's strategic ends, the Israeli Cabinet voted unanimously to conduct the special operation.<sup>79</sup>

#### WAYS

The IDF began planning ways to achieve the strategic ends from the start of the crisis. Lack of intelligence and the extreme distances involved complicated COA development. The initial plan called for a mass airborne assault to seize the entire Entebbe Airport and the collocated military complex. This would give Israel leverage for negotiations with Amin, offering exchange of the airport for the safe return of the hostages and IDF Task Force. When the plan was presented to Rabin, the Prime Minister rejected what he called "an Israeli Bay of Pigs."<sup>80</sup>

The plan was inappropriate for the politically sensitive crisis. The mass airborne assault would jeopardize the hostages and risk the annihilation or capture of the task force. The overwhelming use of conventional force would escalate the crisis instead of facilitating negotiations. Politically, the only acceptable military objective was the rescue of the hostages with "precise and discriminate application of force."<sup>81</sup> A SO was the only way to accomplish this mission.

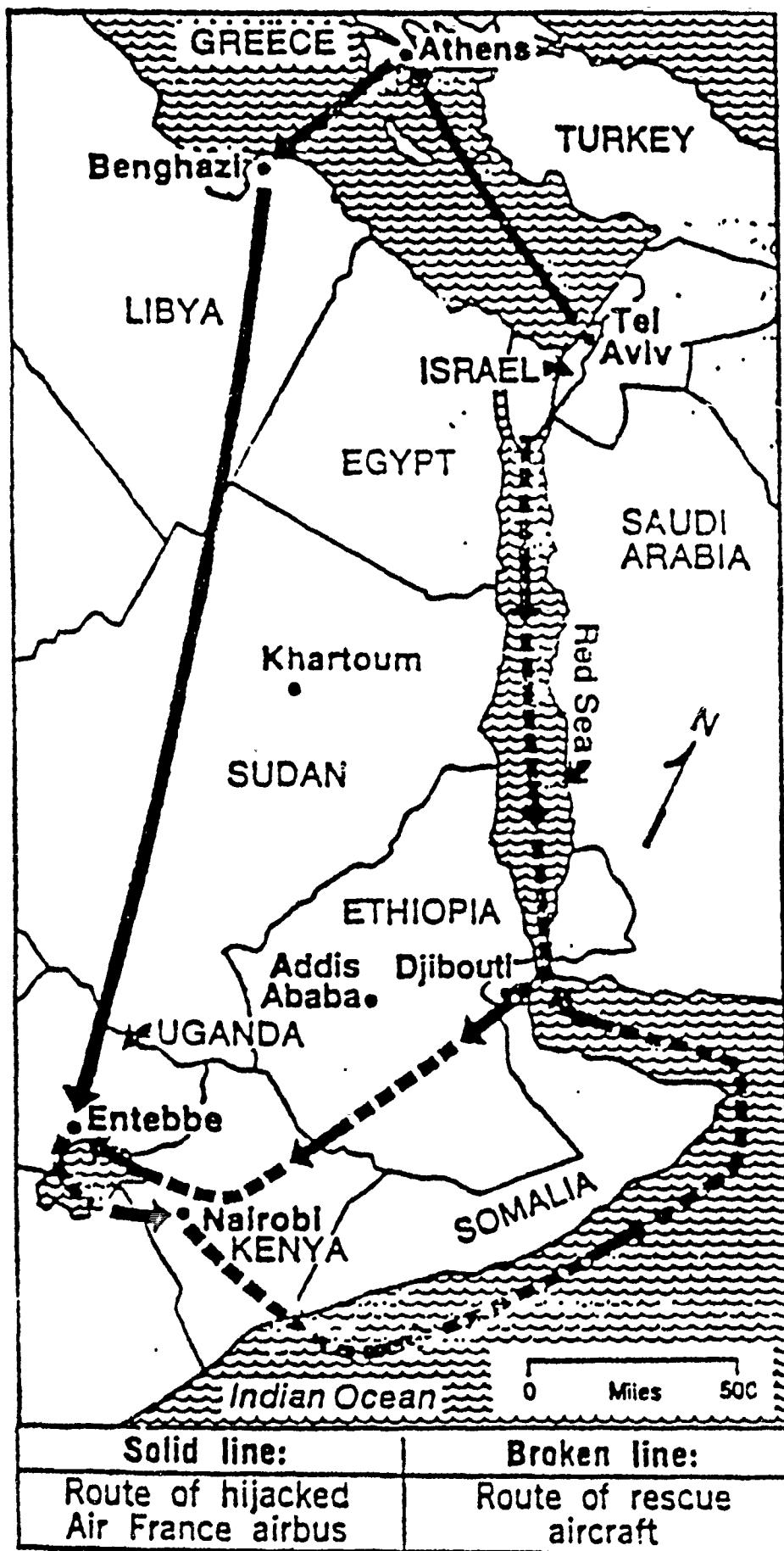
Operation Thunderbolt was designed to rescue the hostages within the political constraints of the crisis. Precise intelligence and refueling rights in Kenya permitted the



development of the plan.<sup>82</sup> The concept required a JSOTF to infiltrate 2500 miles of hostile air space using four C-130s and a mix of special and conventional aircraft.<sup>83</sup> Relying on surprise and electronic deception, the C-130s would conduct an assault landing to deliver the force to the objective. Once on the ground, the assault force would eliminate the terrorists, safeguard the hostages, and seal off the objective from reinforcements. After the hostages were transferred to the C-130's for evacuation, the force would withdraw from the objective and fly to Nairobi Kenya to refuel for the return flight to Israel.<sup>84</sup> (See Map 3)

One shortfall in the plan was that Israel lacked a formal SOF structure to execute the operation. Fortunately, the IDF, because of constant regional terrorism, contained a number of elite counterterrorist units. Designated as "recon units," they provided a trained and ready SOF to form a JSOTF with selected IAF pilots.<sup>85</sup> OPSEC and limited time complicated the preparation of the force and prevented a complete JSOTF rehearsal prior to the operation.<sup>86</sup> In spite of these drawbacks, the mission was a stunning success.

At 2305 hrs 3 July, after a gruelling low-level, radar-evading flight, the assault force landed undetected at Entebbe. In 53 minutes, 104 hostages were rescued. Casualties for the operation were limited to three KIAs and five WIAs among the hostages, and two KIAs and four WIAs sustained by the assault force. Seven terrorists and an unconfirmed



number of Ugandan soldiers were killed including two of the PFLP's top leaders.<sup>88</sup> Operation Thunderbolt was a brilliant success.

Operation Thunderbolt applied military force in a "precise and discriminate" way to achieve Israel's strategic ends. Although the actions at Entebbe were tactical, the impact of the operation extended far beyond "weapon ranges and effects." Operation Thunderbolt demonstrates operational art, and illustrates the political sensitivity and risk involved with the use of military force to resolve a peacetime crisis. SOF, because of its discriminate and precise nature, is an important "tool" for conducting operational art during peacetime competition.

#### SOF IN PEACETIME COMPETITION

Peacetime Competition is a difficult environment for the operational artist. Political restrictions eliminate the use of military forces that rely on mass and firepower. The need for OPSEC and rapid response denies conventional forces time to mobilize and deploy to the crisis area. The objective is defined by political, economic and informational goals, and not by mission, enemy, terrain and troops available. These factors reduce the size of the operational "canvas" and the CINC's artistic "expression."

The operational artist must adapt to the unique constraints of peacetime competition. His tiny "canvas" is restricted in time, space, and means. The nature of the

strategic ends forces him to select a way that measures success by political accomplishment and not by terrain or force destruction. Peacetime competition compresses the operational level and narrows the gap between strategy and tactics until they almost touch. In this situation, a small, precise and discriminate use of force, at the right time and place, is sufficient to achieve the strategic ends. SOF is ideal for the "expression" of operational art on a tiny "canvas."

SOF provides a viable military means for resolving a peacetime crisis. SOF can "tailor" for the specific political situation to provide an appropriate response. The inherent secrecy and responsiveness of SOF is ideal for the sensitive and explosive nature of peacetime competition. SOF, because of its doctrine and training, can adapt to the crisis "battlefield" that is shaped by political and informational maneuvering. Conventional forces, because of their doctrine and training, are grossly inappropriate and unprepared for this type of battlefield.

Special operations is an acceptable way to accomplish the strategic ends in peacetime competition. Resolving a peacetime crisis with military force, considering all the risks and implications, is analogous to the surgical removal of a cancerous tumor. Given the choice between a scalpel and a chainsaw, a surgeon selects the scalpel to make his incision

and remove the tumor. This is why special operations is preferred over conventional assault. The indirect and surgical nature of special operations avoids escalation and defuses the crisis. Conventional operations, to use the medical analogy, would remove the cancer, but kill the patient in the process.

SOF provides the CINC his best "tool" for conducting operational art in peacetime competition. Carefully synchronized with the other elements of power, SOF can directly achieve the strategic ends, or create conditions which facilitate resolving the crisis by other means. Although the use of any military force during peacetime competition involves significant risk, SOF dramatically reduces the level of risk incurred. Primarily a supporting force in war, SOF becomes an important "tool" for the CINC in peacetime competition.

#### SUMMARY

SOF, like a carpenter's combination tool, provides the CINC a versatile means to achieve his strategic ends across the operational continuum. In war, SOF is an integral part of the CINC's overall campaign plan and supports the theater main effort. In operations short of war, SOF becomes the CINC's main effort when political constraints limit the use of conventional forces. Capable of conducting independent SO, or in close cooperation with conventional forces, SOF is a valuable "tool" in the CINC's operational "toolbox."

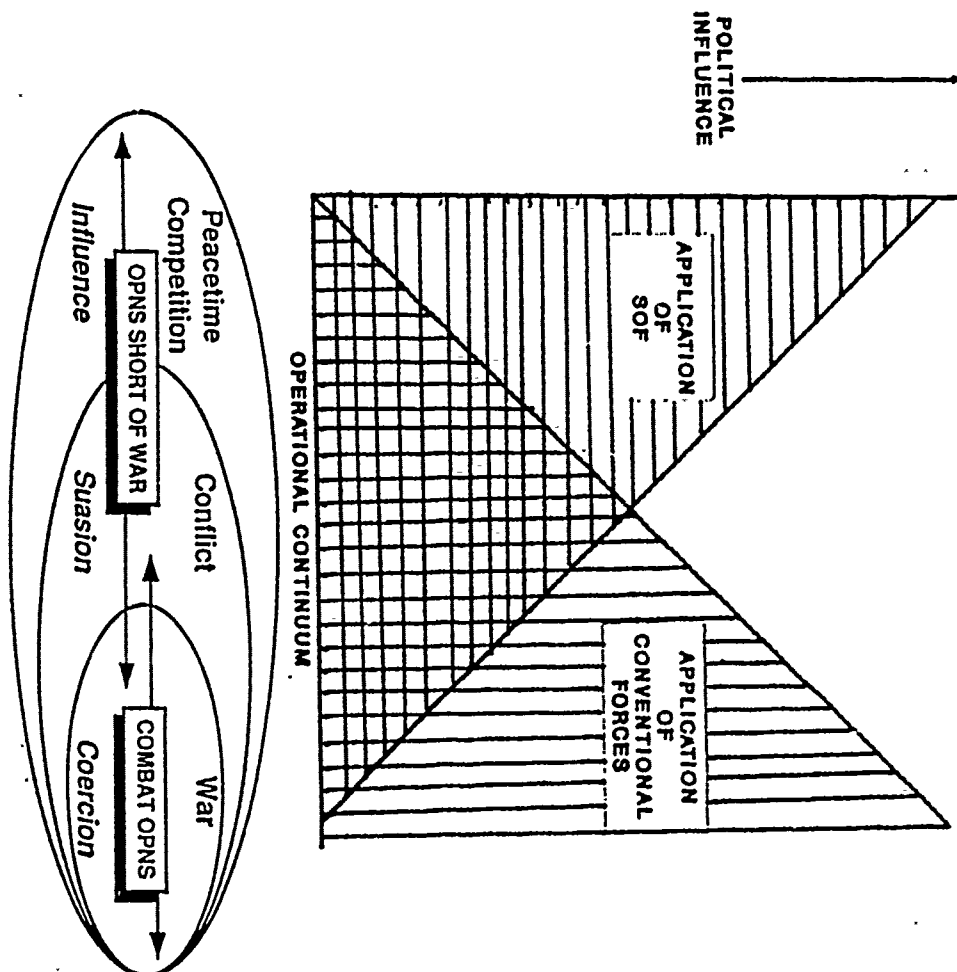
In war, SOF provides the CINC a powerful combat multiplier to shape the battlefield and establish conditions for operational success. Employing the indirect approach, SOF maneuvers to the enemy's rear and strikes to imbalance his enemy center of gravity. The enemy is forced into a reactive condition and diverts attention and forces from the main battle. This serves as a combat multiplier for theater forces and sets the conditions for operational success. SOF supports the CINC's main effort which is, primarily, conventional forces. However, in operations short of war, the role of SOF dramatically increases.

For operations short of war, SOF provides the CINC a significant "tool" for "expressing" operational art. SOF is specifically designed for operating on a battlefield that is shaped by political maneuver and informational "fires." In concert with the other elements of power, SOF achieves strategic ends through the application of precise and discriminate force in a "surgical" manner. SOF relies on timing and placement, instead of mass and firepower, to achieve the political goals and avoid the risk of escalation. Although significant risk is involved, SOF gives the political and military leadership a viable and acceptable military means to achieve strategic ends during periods of conflict and peacetime competition.

The employment of SOF and conventional forces, in relation to the operational continuum, can best be explained graphically. (See Figure B) In war, the political influence

Figure B: Relationship of SOF and Conventional Forces to the Operational Continuum

# RELATIONSHIP OF SOF AND CONVENTIONAL MILITARY FORCE TO THE OPERATIONAL CONTINUUM



upon the environment is relatively small. Conventional forces, with limited constraints, provide the CINC's primary means to achieve the nation's strategic ends. SOF is a secondary, or complimentary, means and supports the conventional force. However, as the continuum moves from war to peacetime competition, the political nature of the environment dramatically increases. This constrains the use of conventional forces and promotes the use of SOF. In peacetime competition, conventional forces are relegated to supporting SOF which becomes the CINC's primary means to conduct operational art. To summarize: As political influence on the operational continuum increases, the application of SOF increases as the ability to use conventional forces decreases.

SOF is a versatile and flexible "tool" that provides the CINC the ability to achieve his strategic ends across the operational continuum. Regardless of the size of the operational "canvas," SOF gives the CINC means and ways to "express" his operational art. Doctrinally sound, thoroughly trained and properly employed, SOF "can produce results that far outweigh their numbers" to achieve both military and political objectives.<sup>89</sup>

#### IMPLICATIONS

An improper understanding of the missions, or the improper employment or support of SOF at any level of command, can result in mission failure, attendant political costs, and possible loss of the entire force.<sup>90</sup>



The three case studies addressed in this paper illustrate the applications of SOF, but in each case an established SOF force structure did not exist. Recognizing the requirement for SOF in today's volatile world, USSOCOM was organized to provide trained and ready SOF. Doctrinally based, appropriately resourced and jointly organized, USSOCOM can conduct SO across the operational continuum in support of U.S. vital interests. However, as the above quote indicates, this capability is irrelevant if it is not understood and properly employed.

Conventional planners must understand SOF. The majority of special operations are planned and controlled by the Unified CINCs and not USSOCOM. Campaign planners for these CINCs can not ignore or disregard SOF's potential as a combat multiplier and economy of force at the operational level. Likewise, the capabilities and limitations of SOF must be understood to avoid misutilization or overextension. The reality of budget cuts and troop reductions requires the full integration of SOF and conventional forces to achieve sufficient military power. However, the burden of interoperability is not the responsibility of the conventional planners alone.

SOF must understand conventional doctrine to integrate into the CINC's campaign plan. The versatility and lethality of a SOF/conventional force mix will not be realized unless interoperability is developed and sustained. SOF must concentrate on interoperability and support of conventional forces

with the same emphasis that it places on independent special operations.

Doctrine and education are key to avoid the "improper employment" of SOF. The barriers of mistrust between SOF and conventional forces must be eliminated to fully achieve interoperability. JCS Pub 3-05 provides the doctrine for the integration and employment of SOF at the operational level. However, service doctrine fails to recognize and fully integrate SOF. The rewrite of FM 100-5 by the Army, and similar efforts by the other services, will fill the present void. Continued efforts to promote the interoperability of SOF and conventional forces will significantly increase the power potential of the United States Military across the operational continuum.

## ENDNOTES

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28. Hunter, p. 104.
29. Allen, p. 318.
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31. Ogburn, p. vi-viii.
32. Ibid., p. 23.
33. Allen, p. 322, 357.
34. Hunter, p. 18.
35. Hoyt, p. 3.
36. Ibid., p. 32.

37. Hunter, p. 173.

38. Hogan, David W., The Evolution of the Concept of the U.S. Army Rangers 1942-1983, (Duke University, 1986), p. 104.

39. Clausewitz, p. 346. Clausewitz states that an envelopment that cuts the enemy's line of retreat is always decisive but "apart from the psychological and physical superiority [in forces required] it can, in effect, only be done by the side that has superior line of communication."

40. Hoyt, p. 23-58; Hunter, p. 27-45; Allen, p. 363. Stillwell, a former West Point football player, referred to the Marauders envelopment of the enemy forces as an "end run."

41. Hoyt, p. 60-107; Hunter, p. 56. The Marauders successfully cut the Kamaing Road at Shaduzup and Inkangatang, but when the Japanese threatened the Chinese eastern flank, Stillwell ordered the Marauders to block the Japanese attack. Two battalions of Marauders were surrounded at Nhpum Ga by a reinforced Japanese Regiment. The siege of Nhpum Ga lasted from March 26 until April 22 when the Japanese withdrew. The Marauders, never designed to be a defensive force, suffered heavy casualties and were exhausted by the siege. The unit never recovered.

42. Allen, p. 363.

43. Ibid., p. 365; Hoyt, p. 108-123; Hunter, p. 82-104. The Marauders were reorganized after Nhpum Ga for the seizure of Myitkina. Task Force Myitkina was composed of the remaining Marauders, less than 2,000 by now, and a Chinese Regiment. However, exhaustion, sickness, and battle losses continued to decimate the overworked unit. On 10 Aug 1944, Merrill's Marauders were disbanded after allegations and investigations of abuse and misuse of the unit. Stillwell's misuse of SOF is a separate, but equally important, study.

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49. Ibid., p. 66. Son Tay was evacuated on 14 July 1970 but constant use of the compound as a barracks facility prevented intelligence from identifying the change in status. On 19 Nov, just prior to the mission, DIA reported that they suspected that the prison was empty, but they could not confirm Son Tay's status. Given the choice of attempting the mission or canceling because of the new unconfirmed intelligence, Blackburn, SECDEF Laird, and CJCS ADM. Moorer all approved the mission.
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57. Ibid., p. 134.
58. Nixon, Richard M., The Memoirs of Richard Nixon, (New York, 1978), p. 859-860; Schemmer, p. 137.
59. Schemmer, p. 45.
60. Ibid., p. 155.
61. Ibid., p. 26, 45, 57; Bailey, p. 103. The 105 airframes include the naval strike package; 2 X MC-130, 5 X HH-53, 1 X HH-3E, assault force; 5 X A1-E, CAS; 5 X F-105, CAP; 10 X F-4, 2 X EC-130, EW; and 8 X KC-135, refuel.

62. Ibid., p. 87.
63. Ibid., p. 173.
64. Ibid., p. 209-235.
65. Ibid., p. 234; Bailey, p. 112.
66. Ben-Porat, Yeshayahu, Eitan Haber, and Zeev Schiff, Entebbe Rescue, (New York, 1977), p. 5.
67. Ibid., p. 71, 110.
68. Ibid., p. 31; Fondacaro, p. 28.
69. de Ste Croix, Philip, ed., Airborne Operations, (London, 1978), p. 213.
70. Stevenson, William, 90 Minutes at Entebbe, (New York, 1976), p. 1.
71. Ben-Porat, p. 121.
72. Ibid., p. 301.
73. Ibid., p. 120, 280; Stevenson, p. 48.
74. Ibid., p. 121.
75. Ibid., p. 253. The IDF's Entebbe Rescue Operation is identified by the operational codename of "Thunderbolt" by virtually all unclassified sources, except one. Ben-Porat identified the operation by the codename "Thunderball." Since Ben-Porat's book is the only officially authorized account of the operation by the Israeli government, it seems that "Thunderball," and not "Thunderbolt," is the correct codename. All sources agree that the operation was renamed Operation Jonathan, after the fact, in honor of the assault team leader, LTC Jonathan Netanyahu, who died in the operation. However, because "Thunderbolt" is the commonly accepted codename for operation, I will use this name for reader clarity and subject identification.
76. de Ste Croix, p. 212.
77. Stevenson, p. 88.
78. Ben-Porat, p. 290.
79. Stevenson, p. x.

80. Ben-Porat, p. 180.
81. JCS Pub 3-05, p. II-10.
82. Fondacaro, p. 29; de Ste Croix, p. 213; Ben-Porat, p. 261. The intelligence was provided by Mossad agents and a wide variety of aerial and electronic sensors. The refueling rights in Kenya was actually the "long pole in the tent." The operation would not have been possible if Kenya had not agreed to permit the ISOTF to land, refuel, and transload casualties to the medical aircraft.
83. Rothstein, MAJ Hy S., Special Military Units - Special Leadership, (USACGSC, 1987), p. 46. The air package included 4 X C130's, assault force; 1 X militarized 707, hospital aircraft; 1 X militarized 707 C2; 2 X KC-135, refuel; 1 X EC-130, EW; and 8 X F-4, CAP.
84. Ben-Porat, p. 249.
85. Ibid., p. 207; Fondacaro, p. 29; Stevenson, p. 95.
86. Ibid., p. 297; Rothstein, p. 48.
87. Stevenson, p. 100.
88. Ibid., p. 119-121; Rothstein, p. 51. Information is unclear on the exact casualties sustained by Ugandan Forces. Sources vary from 20 to 120 KIAs. No doubt, the casualties suffered by the Ugandan Army at the hands of the IDF was much smaller than the purge conducted by Amin following the operation. Another interesting point is the terrorist bodycount. Ten terrorist were identified at Entebbe, but the IDF only reported seven terrorist KIAs. It is widely speculated that the other three terrorist were captured and taken to Israel for prosecution. The one hostage not returned to Israel was at a Ugandan Hospital at the time of the rescue. Intelligence reports indicate that she was executed by Amin the next day.
89. Schemmer, p. 238.
90. JCS Pub 3-05, p. I-3.



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